March 24, 1967

Editor, The American Scholar
1811 Q Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20009

Sir:

With the too many constructive purposes to which I devote my time, I shall not trouble you with a lengthy refutation of the shameful, dishonorable and slanderously titled scrivening in your Spring issue by John Kaplan. Only the pretense of your title warrants even these few moments. If this is an example of American scholarship, me for Sick or Mad. Otherwise, writing in answer to such knavery serves the utility of breaking wind into a hurricane. Only the finks of the "Eastern intellectual community", who spend their time in mutual navel contemplation, are either inspired or deceived into believing falsehood is truth, are influenced by such futilities as his. The kindest things that can be said for your literary and legal lick-spittle is that he has problems of comprehension, suffers confabulations and is lazy. The alternative is to consider him a faker, a deceiver, a distorter, an inventor of evidence and a very irresponsible man.

What Kaplan has done is to read the Report of the Warren Commission, assume it is a truthful and fair representation of what, for lack of any proper designation in the language, we must call the Commission's "evidence", and compare this with so-called "reviews" of the books in supposed question or other secondhand and not unbiased sources, mix the whole mess in a secondhand witch's cauldron and proclaim he has an analysis. His writing has the relationship to reality that Playboy has to sex.

It is clear that if Kaplan has read the books he says he has, he has not understood them. His evasion on mine, entirely unoriginal, is that it is "charity" to pass it over. Other such philanthropists have uniformly declined to debate me on the work of the Commission, their writings, mine, or any combination of their choosing. So will he. This word in his mouth is like "love" on the lips of a whore. He "passes it over" because he cannot and dare not address it. It is the one that comes entirely from the "evidence" of which he has so little knowledge.

Kaplan's knowledge of the literature is so meagre that he was unaware of my sequel, WHITEWASH II: THE FBI-SECRET SERVICE COVER-UP, greeted with a third of a (favorable) page as news by the New York Times of December 7, certainly long enough before your magazine appeared in March for him to stretch his "charity".

His self-demeaning sycophancy is a fresh reminder of the abdication of our intellectuals at the time our society needed them most, when it began to crumble. At that time he was one of the legion of his profession who were mute at the blatant, total and entirely public denial of all of his rights to Lee Harvey Oswald; yet ultimately it is the lawyers in whose hands the freedom of us all reposes.

With lawyers like him, who needs juries and courts?

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg